The campaign to blame the Kennedy family for withholding evidence

One of the earliest records reflecting this false campaign is FBIHQ 62-109060-4235, 12/24/63.

In it the General Investigative Division, using Belmont as the channel to Hoover, quotes J. Lee Rankin as saying that the family wanted to keep the autopsy report as confidential as possible.

There is no distinction in this memo between making something very public and using it in the Warren investigation.

I address this campaign with what I then knew in the chapter, "Hades Not Camelot" in Post Mortem. The record is clear: Robert Kennedy told the Commission it could have anything it wanted.

Part of the same abovecited serial includes J. Edgar Hoover's statement that the Kennedys never asked them to withhold and had they the FBI would not have.

The memo on which he wrote this was the copy directed to him through Tolson.

It is dated 10/7/66.

Although those who had much to hide claim that they were constrained by the expressed desires of the Kennedy family, sometimes making stronger claims, as of 4/9/89 I've not seen any record stating in any way that any Kennedy had made any effort to suppress anything from any official investigation.

Harold Weisberg

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. DeLoach

FROM : A. Rosen

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF
PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY
DALLAS, TEXAS, 11-22-63

DATE: October 7, 1966

1 - Mr. DeLoach
1 - Mr. Rosen
1 - Mr. Malley
1 - Mr. Shroder
1 - Mr. Raupach
1 - Mr. Wick
1 - Mr. Conrad
1 - Mr. Sullivan

Mohr
Callahan
Conrad
Felt
Gale
Trotter
Tele. Room
Holmes
Gandy

PURPOSE:

To answer Director's inquiry and to set forth facts concerning newspaper articles referring to FBI reports reporting results of autopsy examination conducted on President's body. Data in FBI reports is accurately reported.

BACKGROUND:

Articles appeared in the "Washington Evening Star" and "New York World Journal Tribune" (Bob Considine) on 10-5-66, referring to FBI reports which set forth the findings of the examining physicians who conducted the autopsy on President Kennedy's body. These articles refer to FBI reports submitted to the President's Commission on 12-9-63, and 1-13-64. Information set out was orally furnished to the Agents by examining physicians on 11-22-63, and is accurately reported.

ST-107 62-109060-4235

NOV 8 1966

With reference to the above, our reports of 12-9-63, and 1-13-64, accurately quoted the comments of the examining physicians at Bethesda Naval Hospital on the night of 11-22-63. The actual autopsy report is at variance; however, all facts pertaining to this matter were fully given to the Warren Commission and this Commission was fully aware of all such facts. In this connection, our Laboratory report very clearly, accompanied by photographs, showed a slit in the shirt and a nick in the tie which could have been caused by a projectile. The reason that there was variation between the two above-mentioned FBI investigative reports and the Warren Commission report was because the FBI was precluded from disclosing in its preliminary report to the Commission (because of the desires of the Kennedy family) any information concerning the actual autopsy report which, as a matter of fact, was subsequently furnished to the Commission by the Secret Service and used in the final report of the Warren Commission.

RIS:hw
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COPY SENT TO MR. TOLSON

CONTINUED - OVER

79 NOV 4 1966

Memorandum to Mr. DeLoach
RE: ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY

The confusion comes about as a result of the examining physicians changing their original theory as furnished to our Agents on 11-22-63, that the bullet which entered the President's back did not exit from his body. The physicians subsequently concluded that this bullet did exit from the President's body, having passed between two large strap muscles without leaving any channel. The exit hole was obliterated by doctors who performed a tracheotomy on the President at Parkland Hospital, Dallas, Texas. The day after the autopsy examination was conducted, the examining physicians talked to doctors at Parkland Hospital and learned that they had utilized the exit hole as the point of incision for their tracheotomy. This chain of events is clearly set forth beginning on Page 88 of the Commission Report.

We have for some time been checking to find the specific basis upon which the statement has been made in various FBI memoranda (example attached) that the Kennedy family specifically asked that the autopsy report not be released. The fact is that Secret Service specifically claims that Bobby Kennedy had gotten in touch with that agency and had given specific instructions that the autopsy report, as well as photographs, were not to be released. Secret Service has advised that no information from the autopsy was released by that agency until it was turned over to the Warren Commission on 12-23-63. We, therefore, have a basis for any statements made by FBI representatives that the Kennedy family specifically requested that the autopsy report was not to be released.

ACTION:

The above data is set forth for your information.

P R

The confusion which has developed would never have occurred if we had obtained the autopsy report originally. The Kennedys never asked us to withhold it & if they had we should have been [illegible]
H.